



MEMORANDUM

CITY OF WATERTOWN PLANNING OFFICE

245 WASHINGTON STREET, ROOM 304, WATERTOWN, NY 13601

PHONE: (315) 785-7730 – FAX: (315) 782-9014

TO: Planning Board Members

FROM: Kenneth A. Mix, Planning and Community Development Coordinator

SUBJECT: Site Plan Approval – 871 Arsenal Street, AmeriCU

DATE: May 16, 2012

Request: Site Plan Approval for the construction of a 3,500 square foot bank, drive through with canopy, and parking lot at 871 Arsenal Street, parcels 9-11-135 and 9-11-136.

Applicant: Canal Properties II

Proposed Use: Bank

Property Owner: Salvation Army

Submitted:

Property Survey: Yes	Preliminary Architectural Drawings: Yes
Site Plan: Yes	Preliminary Site Engineering Plans: Yes
Vehicle and Pedestrian Circulation Plan: Yes	Construction Time Schedule: Yes
Landscaping and Grading Plan: Yes	Description of Uses, Hours & Traffic Volume: Yes

SEQRA: Unlisted

County Review: Yes

Zoning Information:

District: Commercial	Maximum Lot Coverage: None
Setback Requirements: 20' front, 5' side, 25' rear	Buffer Zone Required: 5-15' along S and E lines

Project Overview: The applicant is requesting approval of plans for the construction of a 3,500 square foot bank, with a three-lane drive through and 36 parking spaces at 871 Arsenal Street, at the former location of a Salvation Army store (previously known as 913 Arsenal Street).

The existing structure and parking lot will be completely demolished and removed. An existing stormwater structure near the southern property line will be abandoned in place. One tree is marked for removal. One curb cut on Bellew Ave will be removed and replaced by two new ones.

The parcel is zoned Commercial, and all setback requirements have been met. However, a substantial portion of the parcel's shared property lines border residential rear yards.

Parking: Code requires 18 parking spaces for a bank of this size, and the applicant has exceeded that requirement with 36 spaces. Two handicap spaces are provided, one on the north side of the proposed building and one on the south.

Vehicle access would be provided by two, two-way curb cuts on Bellew Ave and one exit-only curb cut to Arsenal Street.

The NYSDOT has recommended that the Arsenal Street exit be eliminated. The applicant shall remove this exit from the plans, and also specify that the two existing curb cuts along Arsenal Street be removed and replaced with full-height curbing and sod.

The northerly Bellew cut is approximately 58' from the stop line at the intersection of Bellew and Arsenal, whereas the existing cut it replaces was 72' from that stop line. This close proximity is problematic; vehicles waiting to turn left into the bank could create an obstruction for other traffic coming out of the Arsenal Street intersection. Further, this curb cut opposes the Walgreen's left turn exit lane almost exactly, creating potential turning conflicts with vehicles exiting the bank heading south.

The NYSDOT has recommended that the northerly Bellew Ave cut be changed to an exit-only drive. Alternatively, the City is willing to allow two-way access if this drive is shifted at least 25 feet south from its currently proposed location. This would place the drive 100 feet from the edge of the Arsenal Street travel lane, conforming to DOT guidelines.

Pedestrians: The applicant proposes to leave existing sidewalks in place along Arsenal and Bellew, and has provided two 5' walks between the Bellew sidewalk and the building entrances. No pedestrian access is depicted between the building entrance and the Arsenal sidewalk. An accessible, paved path should be provided between the north entrance and Arsenal Street, in order to accommodate pedestrians approaching from the east.

The sidewalk along the existing Bellew Ave. entrance is not sloped at a true 0.25 inches per foot toward the street. It appears that these sidewalk blocks were intentionally warped to accommodate vehicle access. All sidewalk blocks across this entrance must be replaced to City specifications. The applicant must provide a detail for 5,000 psi concrete at 5" thickness, or 6" thickness with wire mesh across driveways.

The applicant must provide a detail for a City Concrete Curb, 8" wide by 20" tall, with a 6" reveal, or to match existing curbing—as well as a detail for City Asphalt pavement showing 2" top course of NYSDOT Type 6, and 4" of binder NYSDOT Type 1, or match existing.

Lighting: The photometric plan indicates that spillage onto adjacent properties is generally below 0.5 fc. However, the plan indicates that light poles exceeding 20' in height will be installed within 10' of residential rear yards. Although ground-level illuminance does not exceed the accepted threshold, neighbors may be subjected to a direct line of sight to some fixtures, especially those neighbors with second and third floor bedroom windows.

The applicant must install remote or timed switches to disable these lights when the bank is closed.

Utilities: The applicant must depict and label the water lines, sanitary and storm sewer lines, including inverts, along Bellew Avenue and within the property. Also depict the City's fiber optic line located in the east margin of Bellew.

The southerly Bellew Ave. driveway is located over a pull box for the City's fiber optic conduits. To minimize the possibility of damage due to traffic, the driveway must be shifted northward several feet, so that the pull box frame is a minimum of 4' offset from the curb. A note shall be added to the plans reading: "A representative from the City Electric Department must be present at all times during the construction of the driveway and alteration of the pull box."

The applicant must depict the existing water service to Arsenal Street on the Site Demolition Plan, and label the size of the proposed water service. On L1.1 and L1.2, the plans call for coordination with OCWA—these notes should be revised to refer to the City of Watertown Water Department.

The applicant must depict the existing sanitary sewer lateral to Bellew Ave, which runs roughly parallel to the PVC storm pipe along the southern property line.

Landscaping: As noted above, the applicant is removing one 4" tree. This will be replaced by 21 trees around the perimeter of the site, 3 in the parking lot islands, and extensive shrubs and perennials throughout. The number and arrangement of plantings is generally compliant with the Guidelines.

The applicant is required by code to maintain a landscaped buffer between the project parcel and any neighboring residential parcels. As drawn, the buffer is at least 5 feet wide along all necessary property lines, and is more generally between 7 and 14 feet wide.

Setbacks: The site plan has an error in its depiction of the required setbacks. Both the Bellew and Arsenal property lines are shown as front yards, and no rear yard is drawn. According to the Ordinance, owners of corner lots may choose one street frontage as the front yard, and the opposing line is thus the rear yard. Arsenal Street should have a 20' front yard setback, and Bellew Ave should have a 5' side yard setback. The southerly property line should have a 25' rear yard setback. The building as proposed is in compliance with the true setback requirements.

Miscellaneous: The City's Garbage, Rubbish, and Refuse code requires that dumpsters be offset from property lines by a minimum of 15 feet. The dumpster at the rear of the lot is only 7 feet from the next parcel. The dumpster could be shifted to the northeast along the driveway margin to meet this requirement.

The dumpster enclosure is depicted at 12' in height. Code requires that such enclosures not exceed 6' in height.

The applicant must provide a wet stamped copy of the Boundary and Topographic Survey Map, with original seal and signature.

The applicant must file a deed with the County Clerk which combines parcels 9-11-135 and 9-11-136.

The applicant must provide copies of all correspondence with NYSDOT regarding Highway Work Permits for utility installation and curb cut removals along Arsenal Street.

Separate from this site plan approval, a sign permit must be obtained from the Code Enforcement Bureau for the gable sign depicted on Sheet A2/A3. The applicant must also obtain a Sanitary Sewer Permit, Water Permit, Building Permit, and a General City Permit prior to construction.

Summary:

1. The applicant shall remove the Arsenal Street exit from the plans, as required by NYSDOT.
2. The applicant shall remove the two obsolete curb cuts on Arsenal Street, and replace them with full-height curbing and sod (or other appropriate landscaping).
3. The applicant shall either limit the northerly Bellew Ave curb cut to exit-only, or shift the curb cut south by a minimum of 25 feet.
4. The applicant shall provide an accessible, paved pedestrian path between the northerly building entrance and the Arsenal Street sidewalk.
5. The applicant shall replace all sidewalk blocks across the existing Bellew Ave curb cut to City specifications.

6. The applicant shall provide a sidewalk detail showing 5,000 psi concrete at 5” thickness, or 6” thickness with wire mesh across driveways.
7. The applicant shall install remote or timed switches on the two light poles which abut residential rear yards on the eastern property line, and deactivate these lights while the bank is closed (7:00 pm to 8:00 am Monday through Friday, all day Saturday and Sunday).
8. The applicant shall depict all water lines, sanitary and storm sewer lines, including inverts, along Bellew Avenue and within the property.
9. The applicant shall depict the City’s fiber optic line located in the eastern margin of Bellew Avenue.
10. The applicant shall shift the southern driveway northward by several feet so that the fiber optic pull box frame is offset from the driveway curb by 4 feet.
11. A note shall be added to the plans reading: “A representative from the City Electric Department must be present at all times during the construction of the driveway and alteration of the pull box.”
12. The applicant shall depict the existing water service to Arsenal Street on the Site Demolition Plan, and label the size of the proposed water service.
13. The applicant shall revise notes on L1.1 and L1.2 regarding water service so that they refer to the City of Watertown Water Department.
14. The applicant shall depict the existing sanitary lateral near the southern property line.
15. The applicant shall shift the proposed dumpster enclosure so that it does not lie within 15 feet of any property line.
16. The applicant shall reduce the height of the dumpster enclosure to 6 feet or less.
17. The applicant shall provide a wet stamped copy of the Boundary and Topographic Survey Map, with original seal and signature.
18. The applicant shall provide a detail for a City Concrete Curb, 8” wide by 20” tall, with a 6” reveal—or to match existing curbing.
19. The applicant shall provide a detail for City Asphalt pavement showing 2” top course of NYSDOT Type 6, and 4” of binder NYSDOT Type 1, or match existing.
20. The applicant shall file a deed with the County Clerk which combines parcels 9-11-135 and 9-11-136.
21. The applicant shall provide copies of all correspondence with NYSDOT regarding Highway Work Permits for utility installation and curb cut removals along Arsenal Street.

Cc: City Council Members
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